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INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
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RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC
RUEHC/DEPT OF INTERIOR WASHDC
RUCPDC/NOAA NMFS WASHINGTON DC
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SUBJECT: NEW DELHI EST OFFICE HIGHLIGHTS FOR THE WEEK OF OCTOBER 05
TO OCTOBER 09, 2009.

¶1. Below is a compilation of environment, science, and technology
highlights from Embassy New Delhi for the week of October 05–October
09, 2009, including the following:

- Cleaning the Ganga by 2020
- Phasing out HCFCs by 2030
- Dramatic rise in Indian Scientific Output

- US-India Joint Research Reveals Indian Genetic Ancestry
- PM appoints new Infrastructure, Innovation and Information
Advisor

ENVIRONMENT

Cleaning the Ganga by 2020

¶2. (U) At the first meeting of the National Ganga River Basin
Authority (NGRBA), chaired by Prime Minister Singh on Oct 5, the
Chief Ministers of Bihar and Uttarakhand, the Union ministers of
Urban Development, Water Resources, and Environment and Forests, and
the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission declared that by 2020
no untreated municipal sewage or industrial effluents would enter
the river Ganga. Reaching the goal of a clean Ganga will require an
estimated \$3 billion (including a \$1 billion requested loan from the
World Bank), ten years, and specific action plans from the state
governments. Center, state and local municipal bodies expect to
assign responsibilities and sign agreements in February 2010, and
share expenses for the project as well.

Phasing out HCFCs by 2030

¶3. (U) Minister of Environment and Forests Jairam Ramesh announced
that India will freeze the use of hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs)
at 2009 levels by 2013, institute a ten percent reduction from 2009

levels by 2015, and bring HCFCs use to zero by 2030. Seeking global funds and technology, Ramesh said this effort is a giant leap in the dark as it is unclear what will replace the HCFCs. HCFCs use in India has grown at an average annual rate of eleven percent for the last fifteen years, boosted by the sustained growth in demand for consumer, commercial and industrial products.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Dramatic rise in Indian Scientific Output

¶4. (U) India's increased S&T spending over the past several years is starting to show some results. A Thomson Reuters report titled "Global Research Report - India" released this week highlights an 80 percent increase between 2000-2007 in indexed scientific publications - publications recognized by experts as the most significant in their fields - by Indian authors and co-authors. Publications were spread across both life and physical sciences and, while remaining strong in chemistry and agricultural sciences, showed particular increases in computer science, microbiology, and pharmacology and toxicology. Despite the positive movement in overall publications, India's connection with international networks - an important marker of the significance of research activity to partners and of those other countries' ability to engage with the domestic research base - remains very low, with less than a quarter of its publications indicating international collaboration. The USA stands apart in terms of its frequency of co-authorship with India-based institutions, followed by Germany, the UK and Japan. Continued Indian investment in S&T (reported separately in REFTELS)

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is likely to encourage additional advances in S&T that will create opportunities for truly collaborative research by premier U.S. institutions. The full report text can be found at http://science.thomsonreuters.com/m/pdfs/grr-India-oct09_ag0908174.pdf.

US-India Joint Research Reveals Indian Genetic Ancestry

¶5. (U) A joint Indo-US study reviewed over 500,000 genetic markers across the genomes of 132 individuals from 13 states that represented 25 diverse groups, the six main language families, "upper" and "lower" castes, and tribal groups. Their analysis showed that all Indians in the study could be traced to just two pre-historic populations, or genomic groups, referred to as the Ancestral North Indians (ANI) and Ancestral South Indians (ASI.) The study, titled "Reconstructing Indian population history", Nature, volume 461, 489-494, was published by researchers from the India's Center for Cellular and Molecular Biology in conjunction with several Harvard institutes.

PM appoints new Infrastructure, Innovation and Information Advisor

¶6. (U) The GOI this week appointed Mr. Sam Pitroda, chairman of the National Knowledge Commission and a key enabler of the Indian telecom revolution two decades ago, as Advisor to the Prime Minister for Infrastructure, Innovation and Information (at par with cabinet minister.) Mr. Pitroda is expected to prepare and enable an action plan for an integrated approach to innovation for the next decade. He will work with the Ministry of Human Resources and Development, Ministry of Science and Technology, and Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (MCIT) to establish the national knowledge network, spread broad band connectivity to rural areas, enable delivery of e-governance based initiatives, establish better citizen and government interface, leverage Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for delivery of services including transport, telemedicine and justice.

Roemer